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ABSTRACT

Listening is a skill that permeates all curriculum areas at both elementary and secondary levels. Definite philosophies are in evidence pertaining to listening. The testing and measurement movement has stressed using precise, behaviorally stated objectives in teaching-learning situations. Learning opportunities are selected which harmonize with predetermined strategies in the area of listening. The evaluation procedure is matched to the specific learning goals. As a second philosophy of teaching, students with teacher guidance may engage in problem solving experiences. Listening activities can be an important way for students to secure information to solve problems. A third philosophy of teaching, individual decision making, stresses students as the focal point of making choices in the curriculum. The behaviorally stated objectives movement advocates setting behavioral objectives for students to attain. Thus, a teacher, after teaching toward a set of behaviorally stated objectives in listening appraises the extent to which objectives have been attained. Finally, humanism as a psychology of learning emphasizes heavy student input into curriculum development. Content is selected for its intrinsic values of interest, meaning, and purpose for the student. In developing a listening curriculum, ample emphasis should be placed upon the problem solving, as well as the decision-making philosophies. More emphasis should also be placed upon humanism, as compared to the utilization of behaviorally stated objectives. Humanism, which stresses student initiative in the curriculum, allows active student involvement in selecting and solving problems. (MM)

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Listening in the School Curriculum

Listening is a skill that permeates all curriculum areas in elementary and secondary levels of schooling. Good listeners, all things being equal, comprehend content better than poor listeners. They are more attentive, inquisitive, and have a better background of subject matter. One method of acquiring subject matter is through listening. To achieve is to learn content sequentially. What is lost out on in listening to subject matter needs to be made up as to deficiencies. Knowledge is cumulative. Background subject matter provides the basis for learning and understanding new content.

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Definite philosophies are in evidence pertaining to listening. One philosophy, the testing and measurement movement, has received considerable emphasis. Be it state mandated objectives and/or instructional management systems (IMS), the testing and measurement movement has stressed using precise, behaviorally stated objectives in teaching-learning situations. The specific ends state the direction of growth for students in the area of listening. Learning opportunities are then selected by the teacher which harmonize with these predetermined objectives. The learning opportunities are valid if they guide students to attain the precise ends. After the opportunities to learn have been implemented the student is appraised to notice if the specific objectives have been attained. The appraisal procedure is matched to the specific end. Thus, the method in appraising is valid if it harmonizes with the specific objective. Student achievement in listening is measured against the precisely stated objectives.

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Testing and measurement philosophies emphasize the use of:

1. Numerical results to report student progress in listening.
2. Specificity as a concept to notice how much growth has occurred in student listening.
3. Absolute standards in determining student gains in listening.
4. Either/or approaches in noticing if learners have achieved predetermined objectives in listening.
5. Observable results with interobserver reliability to notice student progress.

As a second philosophy of teaching, students with teacher guidance may engage in problem solving experiences. Listening activities can be a major method of teaching for students to secure information to solve problems. Problems are identified by students with teacher assistance. A stimulating learning environment needs to be in evidence to encourage learners to identify problems. After a problem has been chosen, data is gathered by students to develop a hypothesis. Listening is a means of securing content, directly related to the problem. The hypothesis is tested and subject to change and modification.

Problem solving methods tend to emphasize committee work. In society people work in groups to solve problems. Thus, the school curriculum needs to stress committee work. Life-like problems, relevant in society, need to be emphasized in teaching-learning situations. School and society must be integrated, not separate entities.

Problem solving philosophies stress:

1. No absolutes existing in school and in society. Testing and measuring emphasize either a student has/has not attained an objective. Problem solving emphasize tentativeness, such as checking and revising hypotheses. One can only <u>experience</u> the natural/social environment, and not know it as it truly is.

2. Flexibility in thinking. Problems to be selected are open ended within the classroom environment.
3. Reality in learning. Problems are realistic, not textbook/workbook methods of teaching.
4. Interests of students in the curriculum. Students with teacher guidance identify problems of interest to the former. Interest provides for effort in learning.
5. Relationships between school and society. Life-like problems are to be solved.

A third philosophy of teaching to emphasize is individual decision making. Within a flexible framework, the students selects sequential learning opportunities. A learning centers philosophy may well be in evidence here. Thus, from among diverse centers, the student individually may sequentially choose tasks to complete. Those not meeting the needs of a student may be omitted. An adequate number of tasks at stations needs to be available so that continual, sequential completion of tasks is possible.

Decision-making philosophies in teaching and learning stress:

1. Students being the focal point of making choices in the curriculum.
2. Sequence residing within the student when he/she orders tasks to complete. Sequence does not reside within the teacher when ordering listening activities for students.
3. Learners taking responsibilities for choices made.
4. Interests, purposes, and meanings that the student, not the teacher, attaches to content learned.
5. Intrinsic, not extrinsic, motivation to encourage student learning.

Psychology of Instruction

The behaviorally stated objectives movement as a psychology of learning has many advocates. B.F. Skinner (1904-) is a leading advocate of behaviorally stated objectives. Dr. Skinner is interested only in the observable, when students reveal what has been learned. Thus, a teacher, after teaching toward a set of behaviorally stated objectives in listening, appraises if goal attainment is in evidence. If a behaviorally stated objective had not been attained, a different teaching strategy in listening needs to be implemented. A teacher may write behaviorally stated objectives for student attainment in each of the following purposes in listening comprehension:

1. Securing facts and directions.
2. Obtaining main ideas and generalizations.
3. Thinking critically and creatively.
4. Solving problems.
5. Developing a sequence of ideas.

Higher level of thinking, such as items numbered two, three, and four are difficult to write as behaviorally stated objectives. Developing main ideas, generalizations, critical and creative thinking, as well as problem solving represent processes, internal to the student. They to not represent observable results at each specific step of thought.

Toward the other end of the continuum, humanism as a psychology of learning, emphasizes rather heavy student input into curriculum development. Student-teacher planning of objectives, learning opportunities, and appraisal procedures in ongoing lessons and units represents humanism as a psychology of learning. Individualized reading whereby the student selects the book to read, as well as the means of evaluation of achievement, further emphasizes humanism. Content selected has intrinsic values of interest, meaning, and purpose. Mini-courses sequentially selected by the learner

further stresses humanist thinking in teaching students. Humanism, as a psychology of instruction, emphasizes:

1. A humane learning environment in which learners have a voice in determining the curriculum.
2. Meeting needs of students, be it psychological, security, belonging, esteem, and knowledge.
3. An open ended curriculum, which is flexible and invites the interests of students in ongoing lessons and units.
4. Students developing their own essences or purposes in life, rather than a teacher dominated curriculum.
5. Students individuality learning to depend upon the self in the making of choices and decisions.

In Closing

Ample emphasis should be placed upon problem solving, as well as decision-making philosophies in the school curriculum. No doubt, diverse states and school districts have gone overboard on testing and measurement philosophies of education. Isolated, fragmented learning too frequently occurs when students are measured on the number of multiple choice items responded to correctly in testing situations. Or in mathematics, student progress is measured on the basis of answering correctly basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division number pairs. The lowest level of cognition is then involved. If students are engaged in problem solving and decision-making, higher levels of cognition are then involved.

More emphasis should be placed upon humanism, as a psychology of learning, as compared to the utilization of behaviorally stated objectives. Humanism stresses student initiative in the curriculum. Behaviorally stated objectives emphasized an

adult determined curriculum. In these situations, students tend to become passive learners. Rather, students should be actively involved in selecting and solving problems.

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